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mean to deny this. I only suggest that he has not always made his view sufficiently clear. In any case, if there are such blemishes as I have indicated in his work, they are only spots on the sun. His book, on the whole, is a great treasure-house of ripe wisdom.

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J. S. MACKENZIE.

THE MESSAGES OF THE POETS. (Vol. VII of *The Messages of the Bible*, edited by F. K. Sanders and C. F. Kent.) By Nathaniel Schmidt, M.A. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911. Pp. xxiv, 415.

Both the religious significance and the artistic value of the old Hebrew poetry have been to a great extent obscured by an unhappy method of exegesis based on a false theory of inspiration. What is needed in order that these writings may come into their full rights is the employment of strictly scientific principles in their interpretation, and this is what Professor Schmidt has done in the present volume. After a description of the motifs of Old Testament poetry and its form (rhythm, metre, parallelism, strophic structure) and a notice of the poets (David is the only one of them who is known by name), he discusses the ethical and religious value of the poems, and then takes up, one by one, the books and fragments that have been preserved, giving his own translations and adding expositions. In the numerous cases in which the Hebrew text calls for emendation his conclusions will, for the most part, commend themselves to scholars, and his expositions are independent and fresh, and are marked by critical insight and constructive ability. He has rich material of literary illustration and comparison, and the dates he assigns to the various pieces are in accordance with the most advanced Old Testament criticism of to-day. In order, he says, to give the impression of poetry, conveying not only the thought but something of the form of the original, his translations are in metre (generally in iambic unrhymed quatrains). There are obvious advantages in this method—the text may gain poetic flavor and the thought becomes more real to the English reader. The metrical versions are very well done—the choice of words is excellent (the predominance of words of one syllable is noteworthy) and the tone of the original is clearly rendered. On the other hand, the employment of metre

sometimes forces a translator into unnatural forms of expression (as “does God from man profit derive?” “when for it I the limits set”), and it is generally agreed that there are passages in which no metrical version can equal the majestic roll or the pathos or the melody of the King James version. Professor Schmidt recognizes these difficulties, but holds that they are more than counterbalanced by the advantages of the metrical form that he adopts.

In the series of “Messages” separate volumes are given to the Psalmists and the Sages, and for the Poets there remain two books (Job and Canticles), several long poems, and many short pieces. Professor Schmidt’s view of the construction of the book of Job is as follows: The essential part of the work is the discussion in the colloquies (chaps. iii-xxxi, probably composed early in the fourth century B. C.); this the author or some one else attached to the folkstory of the prologue (chaps. i, ii), and the epilogue (xlii : 7-17) was added by a later hand; some critic, wishing to respond to Job’s desire to see God (xiii : 22; xiv : 15), composed the magnificent speeches put into the mouth of Yahwe (xxxviii-x), and still later the Elihu-discourses (xxxii-xxxvii) were added to suggest explanations of Job’s sufferings; chapters xxiv, xxviii, xl : 15-24, xli are interpolations, and there are numerous difficulties in the Hebrew text; the names of the chief disputants seem to have been taken from historical tradition (see Gen. xxxvi : 33-35; Septuagint xxxvi : ii), which would connect the poem with the Edomite region, but it was probably written in Palestine. These conclusions seem to the present reviewer to be just. In the colloquies Job is a Jew, apparently influenced by Greek thought, who stands in despair before the problem of the injustice of the divine government of the world; he offers no solution, and the discourses of Yahwe and Elihu add nothing to what is said on the point in the debate. The poem is an eloquent expression of devout skepticism, as Professor Schmidt brings out in his admirable expository sections.

Canticles stands in sharp contrast with the book of Job—the latter is full of pious thought, the former is absolutely non-religious. To place the two books side by side has the advantage of exhibiting the diversities of the literary output of the late pre-Christian Jews. The critical construction of the “Song of Songs” has suffered many changes, all of which are described

and explained in the present volume. For some years past a favorite view has been that it is a collection of songs in connection with a wedding. It seems that peasants in Syria and elsewhere celebrate marriages by a series of festivities in which bridegroom and bride are called king and queen respectively, each is praised by the other or by the bystanders, and there are dances and other amusements. Professor Schmidt admits that this hypothesis may explain some descriptions in the Song, but points out that it leaves much unaccounted for; in particular, he remarks, the behaviour of the beloved woman in chapter v : 2-8 is not that of a bride—she wanders through the streets of the city late at night seeking her friend, and is maltreated by watchmen and keepers of the walls, seems, in fact, to be treated as if she were a common street-walker. Other difficulties for the wedding-hypothesis appear, and Professor Schmidt takes the book to be simply a collection of love-songs, in which there may be here and there an allusion to some current popular ceremony. Thus much forced interpretation is avoided, and the Song gains when the hero and heroine are considered to be two young people passionately in love with each other and very frank in the avowal of affection and passion. Professor Schmidt also takes literally certain passages (for example, the invitation to come into the garden, iv : 16) that are interpreted by many commentators to refer to nuptial rites. The language of the book is very free—there are parts of the descriptions of the bodies of the two chief characters that cannot be read aloud in a mixed circle, some that cannot be translated for the general reader; but it is unnecessary to find an erotic sense in all references to natural scenery. The Song (the resemblance of which to the idyls of Theocritus has long been recognized) must be placed in the late Greek period, perhaps, as Professor Schmidt suggests, in the first century B. C. The interpretation of the book adopted in this volume is not new, but the author's forcible exposition will secure a wide hearing for it. The allegorical interpretation of the Song, by ancient and modern writers (for the Jews it came to set forth the love of Jehovah for Israel, for Christians the love of Christ for the Church), though exegetically impossible, has historical interest as an expression of mystical feeling; many of the commentaries devoted to it (that of Madame Guyon, for instance) reveal genuine spiritual experience.

The shorter poetical pieces are treated by Professor Schmidt with the same care that he gives to the poetical books. The Deborah-song (*Judges v*), though very early (perhaps the oldest elaborate poem in the Old Testament) shows perfect rhythm and fine imagination; its morals are barbarous, but it is noteworthy that the Hebrews at so early a period (about 1100 B. C.) were capable of such a poetical production; it will be remembered that the desert Arabs, before Mohammed's time, produced poetry of a high order so far as regards form and emotion. The author's comments on the Song of Deborah, the so-called Blessing of Jacob (*Gen. xl ix*), Song of Moses (*Ex. xv*), Prophecies of Balaam (*Num. xxii if*), Song of Moses (*Deut. xxxii*), Blessing of Moses (*Deut. xxxiii*), and the smaller pieces give the reader in condensed form the material for a judgment of the worth of these poems. The minor pieces are arranged in the order in which they appear in the English Version; it would perhaps be better, in order to bring out the development of thought, to give them chronologically (so far as the chronology can be fixed); the difference between *Ex. xv* and *Deut. xxxii* and that between *Gen. xl ix* and *Deut. xxxiii* are obvious.

Professor Schmidt's volume is a welcome contribution to the comprehension of old Hebrew literature. In the small space allowed him he has given an illuminating survey of the surviving poetry, not in a mere statistical form, but with the documents themselves expounded with broad scholarship, critical insight, and fine appreciation of the aesthetic, ethical, and religious tone and features of the old Hebrew thought thus expressed in poetical form.

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HISTORY OF ETHICS WITHIN ORGANIZED CHRISTIANITY. By Thomas Cumming Hall, D.D. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910. Pp. xi, 605.

Jesus, according to Dr. Hall, neither founded a community nor taught a philosophy or an ethics; he set forth an ideal. The history of Christian morality is that of the attempts to embody this ideal, as a fact of Christian experience, in practice. The history of Christian ethics is that of the various efforts to state the theory and principles of this morality. It is with